(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) As per the projections of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 1998-99, it is stated that the Corporation is likely to meet with the operating expenditure from the earnings generated. Thus the Corporation will not suffer any major operating losses. However, due to the financing cost on debt lease charges, which is approximately around Rs. 300 crores per year and depreciation of around Rs. 60 crores, the Corporation is likely to incur an overall loss of about Rs. 360 crores at the end of financial year.

The main reason for loss is the burden of interest (Approx. Rs. 300 crores per annum). Normally a new line of Indian Railways is constructed with capital which is cost-free for the first five years. Konkan Railway, on the other hand, is paying this huge amount of Rs. 300 crores as cost of capital. Secondly, the earnings are below the projected levels due to non-materialisation of freight traffic. While the earning from passenger traffic has materialised as per the expectations, the goods traffic is yet to build up on this line. This is mainly because the industries along the line have not kept pace with the commissioning of the Konkan Railway line. The general recession in industry has also resulted in slump in the transport segment.

(b) To improve the financial position, the steps taken are as under:—

(i) The Ministry of Railways have diverted passenger trains on the shorter route. Additionally, two new trains have been started on this route which have improved the revenues of the Konkan Railway.

(ii) Goods traffic: Meetings have been held with the Chambers of Commerce and specific stream of commodities like cement and fertiliser have been addressed even offering incentives to move the traffic on this route and attract the same back from Road and Vessels.

(iii) Ministry of Railways have also provided cash assistance of Rs. 50 crores during 1998-99. Further cash assistance will be provided from within the resources available.

(c) As far as passenger trains are concerned, more than projected number of trains have been diverted and running on the system. However traffic is yet to build up for goods trains.

(d) Goods traffic is not developed because the projected originating goods traffic on Konkan Railway has not borne out due to subdued business environment. Therefore the line capacity utilisation on Konkan Railway is entirely dependent on diversions of goods trains by Indian Railways which has not materialised. Currently only 40% line capacity is utilised.

Clandestine Service of Liquor in trains

1230. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that liquor is served to passengers in Rajdhani and other trains clandestinely by the catering staff;

(b) if so, whether complaints have been received in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check this malpractice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However one complaint was received regarding serving of liquor on New Delhi-Mumbai Rajdhani train. Based on the complaint a Vigilance check was carried out on August Kranti Rajdhani Express on 18.8.1998. During the check it was detected that one of the bearers was indulging in supply of liquor to the passengers.

(c) The waiter found responsible has been issued major penalty chargesheet. The Train Superintendent has also been taken up for his lack of supervision.

Checks are being conducted frequently by Railway officials to check supply of unauthorised items.

Double Tracking of NJP and Bongaigaon Sector

1231. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether double tracking of the NJP and Bongaigaon sector of NF Railways has been waiting investment clearance;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be cleared and commissioned;

(c) the benefits to be derived from each; and

(d) the allocation made for gauge conversion of Rongiya-Mukongchelek and Makum-Dangori sections of NFR, and time of its commissioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The project has since been cleared. The work is being taken up and is expected to be completed by the end of the 9th Plan subject to availability of resources in the coming years.

(c) the conversion of the line would serve the purpose of doubling between New Jalpaiguri and New Bongaigaon and will also bring Siliguri on the BG network.

(d) Gauge conversion of Rangia-Murkongselek is not yet sanctioned. Makum-Dangori is a part of the sanctioned project of Lumbding-Dibrugarh gauge conversion including linked fingers. An outlay of Rs. 2 crs. has been provided in 1999-2000 for this project. This work is expected to be completed in the 9th Plan subject to availability of resources.

Mechanism to run the Trains in Foggy Weather

1232. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any thought has been given by Government to devise a mechanism to run trains in foggy weather, as in most of the Western countries;

(b) if so, whether any exercise has been made by Government in the matter of technical advancement and financial implications, to meet the objective; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Western countries have adopted Cab. Signalling system and Auxiliary Warning System which enables the display of signal aspect inside the Driver's Cab. and causes automatic application of brake in case the Driver does not apply brake while approaching a 'Red' signal. A pilot project of European Train Con-